

Light in the Darkness

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Preacher: Cedric Moss

[0:00] Well, I trust your hearts have been encouraged and filled with joy that comes from singing songs that remind us of singing songs that remind us of singing.

Will you join me in thanking them this morning? Well, literally for just a few minutes, I want to direct our attention to a part of the opening verses that were read at the start of the presentation this morning.

John chapter 1 verses 1 through 18. That passage was read, and I want to direct our attention right now to a single verse from that passage.

It's verse 5. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Let me consider this passage that was read, these opening verses in John's gospel.

The apostle John tells us that Jesus is the light who has come into the world. He is the light that shines into the darkness.

[1:38] In verse 4, John calls him the light of men, and then in verse 9, he calls him the true light. And when John tells us in verse 5 that the light shines into the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it, John is reminding us of two unchanging realities.

First, he says the light shines in the darkness.

But he says the light shines into the darkness. Jesus didn't come as a light into sunlight. He came as a light into darkness.

And I think we've all lived long enough, and if we're honest enough this morning, we would acknowledge that our world is filled with darkness. There's a darkness of suffering and sickness. It's filled with darkness.

[3:28] Our broken world can be described in that one word, darkness. And the truth is that the root of the darkness is sin.

The root of the darkness is that men, women, boys, and girls have rebelled against the holy God. The holy God who is light and in whom there is no darkness at all.

But John tells us that the light shines into that darkness. And notice how John says it. John does not say the light shined into the darkness some 2,000 years ago.

He says the light shines into the darkness. Friends, the light continues to shine into the darkness because the world is still dark.

Even now as we are in what seems to be a never-ending pandemic where we have seen enormous loss of lives and livelihoods, the light shines into the darkness.

[4:39] So that's the first reality that John reminds us of. The second is the power of the light.

John tells us in the second part of verse 5 that the darkness has not overcome the light. I think it's easy to miss what John is saying, so let me try to fill it out just a little bit.

What John is saying is this. It is remarkable that as dark as the world is, the world has not overcome the light.

The light still penetrates into the darkness. The darkness has not overcome the light. I think most of us have been in situations maybe trying to take a cell phone light and shine into some dark place, and the darkness just overwhelms it, and we still can't see.

John says, no, it wasn't like that. He says the light shines into the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. What John is saying is that there is no darkness.

[5:53] The light of Christ cannot overcome. And when we think of darkness, a lot of times we think outside and around ourselves.

We think about those things that are unrelated to us. And when we do that, we overlook what I think is really the most important darkness. The most important darkness is not the darkness without. It's the darkness within. It's personal darkness. And in truth, that's why Jesus came. Jesus came as the light of men because we are dark.

And that's not flattering, friends, but that's true. There's darkness in the best of us. And Christ Jesus came into the world to shine into the darkness.

He is the true light, and only the true light can remove the darkness in our hearts that's caused by sin. And that is why Jesus came into the world.

[7:00] And so often what we do is instead of coming to the true light, we go to substitute lights. We go to false lights. We go to the false lights of money, the false lights of a good education, the false lights of good deeds, and even church attendance.

And, friends, none of those can extinguish the darkness that is in our hearts. You know, even if we got every single gift that we could ever desire for this Christmas, it will not remove the darkness.

And why? Because only the true light who has come into the world, Jesus Christ, can remove the darkness of our hearts and lives. And, friend, it doesn't matter how dark.

It doesn't matter who you are. It doesn't matter what you've done. It doesn't matter how deep the darkness. The light shines into the darkness. And the darkness has not overcome it.

And how does Christ shine into the darkness? Well, John goes on in his gospel. He tells us how. What he tells us is that Jesus Christ went to the cross, and he died for the darkness.

[8:21] He took the place of people in darkness who deserved to be on the cross. And God poured on him what the darkness deserves.

And some of you who may remember, when Jesus died at 12 noon, the brightest time of the day, he was gulped in darkness.

And he who was light knew darkness, so that we who are darkness may know light. Christ alone dispels the darkness of the human heart.

And, friends, that's the only way out. It's the only way out. Everything else is a false and a poor substitute. I imagine that for some of us gathered or even listening by live stream, this talk about light and darkness doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

And that is understandable. The reason that is understandable is that Jesus was at one time talking to the most religious man in all of Israel, a well-learned man, and he did not understand these things.

[9:42] And Jesus said to him, what you need is you need to be born again. And if what you're hearing this morning about darkness and light is kind of going over your head, friend, it is because you need what the Bible refers to as the new birth.

And that is the work that God does. He forgets us from above. And he brings light into our hearts so that we can be forgiven of our sins and so that we might be reconciled to him.

But he doesn't do it in a vacuum. He did it because his Christ, his son, who came into this world as a baby, went to the cross as a man and died in the place of undeserving sinners like me and you. And so I encourage you this morning, come to the light. You who are in darkness, come to the light. Come to the light that only Jesus Christ provides. And if you do, the light will shine into the darkness. And it matters not how dark your darkness is.

[10:56] Your darkness will not overcome it. There's more than enough light in Christ for the deepest darkness. I want to give a personal invitation to anyone who would acknowledge there's darkness in my heart.

There's darkness in my life. I've not experienced that new birth that you've talked about. I'd love to talk with you. If you're here, rather, after this service, I will make myself available to talk with you. If you're watching my live stream, there'll be information provided how to reach me. I would love to have a conversation with you. But friends, let us remember that the light has shined into the darkness.

That light is shining into the darkness now. And the darkness, however dark, has not overcome it. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for sending the Lord Jesus Christ into the world for undeserving sinners like us.

We thank you, Lord, that despite the depth of the darkness, our dark world has not overcome the light.

[12:12] And the light still shines today. Lord, we who have come to the light rejoice. And Lord, those who have not yet come to the light, would you have mercy on them?

Would you open their eyes and cause the light of Christ to shine into their hearts? We pray this in Christ's name.

Amen. Let's stand for our closing song.